

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 4-5, 10, 13-16 and 18-19 are amended and claims 1-3, 6, 9 and 11-12 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein. No new matter is added. Claim 20 is allowed. Claims 4-5, 7-8, 10, 13-16 and 18-20 are pending in the patent application.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of this Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 20 is allowed.

The Examiner also indicated that claims 4-5, 7-8, 10, 13-16 and 18-19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response, claims 4-5, 10, 13-16 and 18-19 are rewritten in independent form. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are now allowable. It is also respectfully submitted that claims 7 and 8 are also allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from claims 4 and 5, respectively.

Claims 1-3, 6, 9, and 11-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Sakai (JP 2001-266301) in view of Jiang *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,621,649) (hereinafter "Jiang") and Dakroub (U.S. Pat. No. 5,993,348).

Claims 1-3, 6, 9, and 11-12 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering the rejection of these claims moot.

The rejections having been addressed, Applicants request issuance of a notice of allowance indicating the allowability of all pending claims. If anything further is necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants request that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

SAKAI ET AL. -- 10/674,506
Client/Matter: 008312-0306165

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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